

and semi-barbarians, naturally cannot have been congenial to the Christian religion. In spite of the Labarum, service in the army was discountenanced by the more zealous Christian bishops. Yet nothing could be more unfair than to charge Christianity with having introduced into the Roman world the reluctance to carry arms. That reluctance dated back to the latter days of the Republic. Christianity merely intensified it.

Christianity, again, may be acquitted of having caused the decadence of literature and the arts. That decadence was of long standing. There had been a steady decline from the brilliant circle of Augustan poets and prose writers to the days of the Antonines. The third century had been utterly barren of great names. Literature had become imitation ; originality was lost. Society was literary in tone; grammarians and rhetoricians flourished; learning was not dead but active; yet the results, so far as creative work was concerned, were miserably small. But if Christianity cannot be held responsible for the poverty of imagination in the ranks of pagan society, it must be held responsible for its own shortcomings. It often assumed an attitude of open hostility to the ancient literature, which was to be explained—and, so long as paganism was a living force, might be justified—by the fact that the poetry of Rome was steeped in pagan associations. Men to whom Jupiter was a false deity or demon; to whom the radiance of Apollo was hateful because it was a snare to the unwary; to whom the purity of Diana, the cold